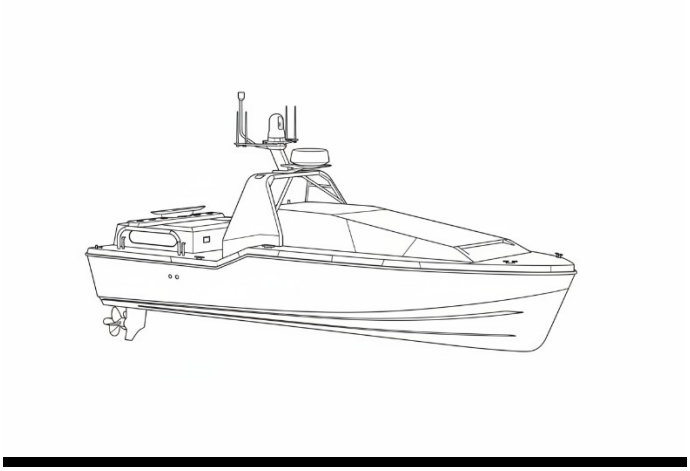
Saronic Corsair



SURFACE — Medium Autonomous Surface Vessel (24 ft) — Flagship Production Platform

Manufacturer: Saronic Technologies (Austin, TX, USA)

Designation: Corsair

Type: Medium autonomous surface vessel (ASV)

Role: Multi-mission: ISR, patrol, strike, logistics, mine countermeasures, ASW — payload-dependent

Status: In production. $392M Navy contract (December 2025). Austin facility producing now; capacity 400–500/year, ramping to 2,000/year.

Specifications

Length: 24 ft (7.3 m)

Speed: 35+ knots

Range: 1,000+ nm

Payload Capacity: ~1,000 lbs (454 kg)

Autonomy: Echelon autonomy stack; fully autonomous or supervised operations; swarm-capable

Unit Cost (Est.): ~$1.2 million

Operational Profile

Navy Contract: $392M production OTA through 2031; $200M available immediately; first major U.S. Navy autonomous surface vessel production award

Production Scale: Austin factory currently building Corsairs at 400–500 per year; new production line targets 2,000 per year

Concept of Operations: Multi-mission workhorse. At 1,000 nm range and 1,000 lb payload, Corsair can carry sensors, weapons, EW payloads, or logistics packages across operational-scale distances. Operates alone for extended autonomous patrol or in swarms for distributed maritime operations.

Payload Flexibility: Modular architecture accepts ISR sensor suites, electronic warfare packages, anti-ship weapons, mine countermeasure payloads, or logistics containers depending on mission

Countermeasure Vulnerability Profile

RF Jamming / GPS Denial: LOW vulnerability. Echelon designed for GPS-denied and communications-denied operations. Autonomous navigation continues without external signals.

Visual/Radar Detection: MODERATE. At 24 ft, Corsair presents a small radar cross-section but is not invisible. Low freeboard reduces visual signature at distance.

Kinetic Intercept: Small, fast-moving surface target. Difficult to engage with shipboard weapons at range; vulnerable to autocannon, machine gun, or anti-boat missile at close range.

Electronic Warfare: NVIDIA edge-AI processing reduces reliance on data links; vessel can continue autonomous operations when communications are jammed or degraded.

Swarm Resilience: Loss of individual Corsairs does not degrade overall mission — swarm redistributes tasks among surviving units. This is the core asymmetric advantage.

CRUISE MISSILE CONVERGENCE NOTES

Corsair occupies the exact convergence zone the Drone Bible tracks. Consider what it is: a 24-foot autonomous vessel with 1,000 nm range, carrying 1,000 lbs of payload, navigating autonomously in GPS-denied environments, operating alone or in coordinated swarms. Now compare to a cruise missile: autonomous navigation, pre-programmed mission, payload delivery at range, no crew required.

The difference is reusability and flexibility. A Tomahawk flies once. Corsair can conduct a patrol mission Monday, deliver supplies Tuesday, carry an ISR sensor package Wednesday, and deploy a mine countermeasure payload Thursday. If it needs to, it can be expended as a one-way weapon — but that's a choice, not a design constraint.

At $1.2M per unit with production scaling to 2,000 per year, Corsair costs less than a single Tomahawk ($2M+) and is reusable. Deploy 50 Corsairs to a strait for the cost of 30 cruise missiles, and those 50 platforms provide persistent ISR, patrol, and strike capability for months rather than a single impact.

This is the naval version of the air domain's drone-cruise missile convergence: the same technologies (autonomous navigation, modular payloads, mass production) applied to surface warfare.

Drone Bible Assessment

Corsair is the centerpiece of the Saronic lineup and the most consequential autonomous surface vessel program in the U.S. Navy today. The $392M contract validates the platform at the highest level. The production numbers are the real story: 400–500 per year today, ramping to 2,000 per year. No other autonomous vessel manufacturer in the world is operating at this scale.

At $1.2M per unit, the Navy can buy 320+ Corsairs for the cost of a single DDG-51 destroyer ($392M). Those 320 Corsairs, distributed across an operating area, provide a sensor and weapons network that a single destroyer cannot match in coverage, survivability, or persistence. The destroyer can be sunk by a single anti-ship missile. Destroying 320 autonomous vessels requires 320 separate engagements.

The MAGURA Comparison: Ukraine's MAGURA V5 is 5.5 m, carries 320 kg, and costs $250K–$300K. Corsair is 7.3 m, carries 454 kg, and costs $1.2M. Corsair costs 4× more but offers dramatically better autonomy software (Echelon vs. MAGURA's mesh radio + FPV), is reusable rather than primarily kamikaze, and is built on a production line rather than wartime improvisation. The MAGURA proved the concept; Corsair industrializes it.